



God's Grand Story: The Divided Kingdom—Pride vs. Humility

January 15, 2023

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, is heir to the throne.

2 Chronicles 12:14— "And he did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD."

Rehoboam did evil not because he was evil, but because of something that he did **not** do.

He did not set his heart to seek the LORD.

Ephesians 5:15-16— "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

Rehoboam did not understand that the days are evil, and in this life, there's a pull toward evil.

Rehoboam comes to a major decision time in his life that he is not ready for.

In 2 Chronicles 10, King Solomon has just died, and Rehoboam, is preparing to assume Israel's throne.

All the people of Israel had gathered for his coronation. But before pledging their allegiance to him, the people present him with this request:

2 Chronicles 10:4-5— "Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." And he said to them, "Return to me again in three days." So, the people departed."

Before Rehoboam gives his answer to the people, he seeks out counsel first. By all appearances, this seems wise.

2 Chronicles 10:6— "Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?""

First, he gathers his father's older advisors, men whose knowledge is seasoned with years of experience, and asks their advice.

They offer this recommendation: *"If you will be kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."* (2 Chronicles 10:7)

2 Chronicles 10:8— "But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him."

2 Chronicles 10:10— "And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him saying, "Thus you shall say to the people who spoke to you, saying 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us.' Thus you shall say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins!"

2 Chronicles 10:11— "Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."

Rehoboam takes their counsel over the counsel of the older wiser men. When he announces to the people his intention to be harder on them than his father was, most of Israel's tribes renounce all allegiance to Rehoboam and choose their own king, splitting the nation in two.

It took 120 years to build the kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon. It took only days for foolish Rehoboam to throw it all away.

What is behind this foolishness of Rehoboam? Pride.

Pride can cause us to foolishly turn away from listening to sound advice.

2 Chronicles 10:16— "And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them the people answered the king, saying, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel; now look after your own house, David." So all Israel departed to their tents."

And the result is a split in Israel. The nine northern tribes leave and form their own group that will be called Israel. And the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin will remain with Rehoboam. (While the Levites are scattered among both groups).

How was pride behind this whole fracture?

1. Pride can tempt us to underestimate our ignorance.

We see this in Rehoboam. Regardless of how many decades the older men had in actual governing experience, the new king and his peers believed they knew better.

Sometimes our problem is not that we don't know what is best, but that we don't know what we don't know.

Pride can tempt us to underestimate our ignorance.

2. Pride wants to avoid appearing weak.

In the ancient Near East, the most respected, successful kings were typically strong and ruthless. Rulers didn't allow subjects to set the terms.

Rehoboam's decision was made not with faith in God's power, nor with his people's good in mind, but with his desired reputation primarily in view.

Our prideful reluctance to be viewed as weak can easily distort our decisions and plans.

3. Pride predetermines the counsel it will accept.

The prideful person may get some counsel, but since they are already convinced that they know what is best, they will predetermine the counsel that they will accept.

He knew his young counselors' perspective because they "stood before him" (2 Chron. 10:8) — they were his team of advisors. And it's likely these advisors were feeding Rehoboam what they knew he wanted to hear. He wasn't looking for advice; he was looking for validation of his predetermined plan.

Think about how much was derailed in God's plan due to the pride of one man.

The challenge of walking in wisdom, of seeking out wise counselors and listening carefully to their advice, is humbling. Walking in humility and not pride is always the best path to take.

The thing about pride, is that what a proud person really wants is to be honored. And pride is the very thing keeping them away from honor.

The Bible tells us how to attain honor:

- 1. The one who gains wisdom gains honor (Prov 3:35; 4:8)**
And the way to gain wisdom is to seek the LORD. And the way to get wisdom is to seek wise counsel from others. And that is the way to attain honor.
- 2. Humility comes before honor (Prov 15:33; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23)**
The way to true honor is not by pride but by humility.
- 3. The one who is gracious attains honor (Prov 11:16)**
The way to honor is by being gracious, not by being harsh.
- 4. The one who regards reproof attains honor (Prov 13:18)**
The way to honor is to be paying attention to reproof and rebuke, not by disregarding it.
- 5. The one who avoids strife attains honor (Prov 20:3)**
The way to honor is by avoiding strife, not instigating strife.
Rehoboam failed on all five guidelines for attaining honor, and that is why he was rejected by most of Israel, and that is why he brought about the division that would haunt Israel for hundreds of years.

So, don't be like Rehoboam. Set your heart to seek the Lord, seek wise counsel, and always take the road of humility.